

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-07 COME-00 /043 W

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R 030500Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 382

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PASS DEFENSE CNO

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, EIND, MMOL, MILI

SUBJECT: PATROL BOATS FOR ROYAL THAI NAVY

REF: BANGKOK 75 26660

1. ON JUNE 29 THE CABINET, AFTER WEEKS OF CONTROVERSY, APPROVED THE PURCHASE OF THREE MISSILE PATROL BOATS FROM THE ITALIAN FIRM CANTIERE NAVALE BRED A AT A COST OF \$60.2 MILLION. THE COST INCLUDES ARMAMENTS AND OTHER SUPPORTING GEAR.

2. THE FINAL COMPETITION FOR THIS LUCRATIVE CONTRACT WAS BETWEEN BRED A AND THE TACOMA BOAT COMPANY, AN AMERICAN FIRM. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS ANONYMOUS ARTICLES APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PRESS ALLEGING THERE WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL KICK-BACKS TO RTN OFFICERS SHOULD BRED A SECURE THE CONTRACT. BECAUSE OF THESE ALLEGATIONS THE THAI CABINET ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS REFUSED TO APPROVE THE RTN RECOMMENDATION THAT THE NAVY BE AUTHORIZED TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH BRED A. THE RTN PERSISTED, APPLYING STRONG PRESSURE ON THE CABINET, AND CONTENDING THROUGHOUT THAT THE CHARGES OF IMPROPRIETY WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THE CABINET FINALLY CAPITULATED AND AUTHORIZED THE RTN TO PROCEED WITH THE BRED A CONTRACT.

3. RUMORS PERSIST THAT THE CONTROVERSY IS FAR FROM OVER. THIS CONTRACT HAS CREATED RIFTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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AND A NUMBER OF MEMBERS APPEAR DETERMINED TO ENGINEER A

REVERSAL OF THE CABINET DECISION AND A CANCELLATION OF THE
ENTIRE PATROL BOAT SCHEME. SOME MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE
ALSO INTERESTED IN THE MATTER.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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